

Pilgrimage Through the Watchtower

Chapter 6: The Study



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Chapter 6: The Study

Having made up my mind to do the study, I was immediately faced with a formidable problem. How does one go about doing an "objective" study of the Bible? The Watchtower method was obviously out of the question. I'd already decided not to use Watchtower literature, except as reference material, in my study. But the Watchtower's "read the paragraph, ask the question at the bottom of the page, underline the answer in the paragraph" method was the only one that I knew! What to do? I had to come up with something on my own.

As a start, I decided to read through an independent translation of the New Testament (by this point I wasn't sure whether I could trust the New World Translation) and write down all of the Scripture verses that I was having trouble with. I did this, using the New American Standard Bible, and came up with a list of two hundred verses. I then compiled these verses into fifty-eight subjects: the deity of Christ, the personality of the Holy Spirit, the great crowd, the 144,000, the year 1914, the rapture, hellfire, how to be saved, etc. Then, after reading through what I had compiled, the gravity of what I had just done hit me like a ton of bricks. I had now succeeded in destroying all of my deepest convictions concerning God, His people, the outworking of His plan of salvation, and my place in this whole affair. I was now undeniably, utterly lost!

I was still convinced, however, of three things. I knew that the Bible was God's inspired Word. I also knew that God must have people on this earth who worshiped Him in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). And I still believed that God cared for us, and that He had sent His Son Jesus here to die for us. These things were enough to convince me that God would, as Jesus had promised in John 16:13, lead even me into "all the truth."

In earnest prayer I pleaded with God. "Jehovah," I prayed, "I've torn your book apart! Please, my God, help me to put it back together again. Explain to me what You've written. I acknowledge my helplessness in this situation. Jehovah, should you see fit to lead me out of this mess, I vow that all honor and glory for this will be returned to you. Please, my God, save me from this terrible state of confusion!" And I trusted Jehovah, that He would, in His own way, in His due time, assure me of the truth that I so desperately sought.

I reread the New Testament, this time using the Revised Standard Version. I divided each of the fifty-eight topics into two sections each; one section for all the verses that I could find that seemed to support the Society's viewpoint on each subject, and the other for those that were seemingly antagonistic to it. I then read the New Testament again, this time the New International Version, and continued filling out the two sections for each subject. This I repeated a fourth time, using the New American Standard Bible.

As I compared the various translations of these compiled verses, checking each crucial verse with two Greek interlinears and a Greek lexicon, my confidence in the New World Translation began to wane. Time after time I discovered what appeared to be deliberate mistranslations in the text of the NWT, particularly regarding the identity of Jesus. A few examples should suffice: "they will certainly look to *the One* (Heb. Me) whom they pierced through" (Zech 12:10), "But when he again brings his First-born into the inhabited earth, he says: 'And let all God's angels *do obeisance* (Gr. worship-see NWT, Heb 1:6 footnote) to him.'" (Heb 1:6; see also Matt 2:2, 8, 11, 14:33, John 9:38), "In [the] beginning the Word was, and the Word was with God, and the Word was *a god* (Gr. God was the Word)" (John 1:1), "Jesus said to them: 'Most truly I say to you, Before Abraham came into existence, *I have been* (Gr. I am-cp. Ex 3:14, LXX)." (John 8:58), "who, although he was existing in God's form, *gave no consideration to a seizure, namely, that he should be equal to God* (Gr. who in [the] form of God subsisting not robbery deemed [it] the to be equal with God)" (Phil 2:6), "Christ; because it is in him that all the fullness of the *divine quality* (Gr. Deity or Godhead) dwells bodily" (Col 2:8-9). I found similar discrepancies in the NWT on verses which explain the Christian requirements for salvation (John 17:3, Rom 10:9-10, Heb 13:15), the Christian's personal relationship with Christ (1 Cor 1:9, 2 Cor 11:3, 2 Cor 13:5, 1 John 1:3) and many other verses on other important topics (Matt 5:18, Matt 27:52-53, Acts 5:3, 2 Cor 11:8, Eph 4:24, Col 3:10, Heb 12:23, etc.). Regarding the insertion by the New World Translation committee of the name "Jehovah" into the text of the New Testament, the Watchtower's own statement should suffice: "Why, then, do all extant copies of the 'New Testament' lack the Tetragrammaton?" (WT 5/1/78, p. 10). All things considered, I found the New World Translation to be sorely mistranslated in accordance with the preconceived theology of its biased and unscrupulous translators.

Although I knew virtually nothing of the science of Biblical hermeneutics at the time, I soon realized something that

revolutionized my understanding of the Scriptures. I began to see, much to my amazement, that the great majority of Bible passages made perfect sense if I simply took them literally, provided there were no indications within the texts themselves that I should do otherwise. Suddenly passages involving the still unfulfilled prophecies given to the nation Israel in the Old Testament (Gen 13:14, 15, Is 2:1-4, 11:9, 11-12, 66:20, 22, Jer 33:14-16, Amos 9:14, 15, Zech 14:3, 4, 16, 17, etc.), the "rapture" verses (1 Thess 4:15-17), and verses describing the second coming of Christ ("every eye will see him," Rev 1:7) began to take on wonderful new meaning. I was learning the beauty of the "grammatico-historical method" of Bible interpretation: If the plain sense of Scripture makes good sense, seek no other sense! What's more, discarding the Watchtower's often fanciful "spiritualized" interpretations in favor of taking the Bible at face value began to make the help of the Watchtower's "faithful and discreet slave" superfluous. If I could read the Bible, take it literally, and understand it, what need was there for the "faithful slave class?"

Here are the conclusions that I came to after five months of intensive study (the complete [study](#) is available on line):

God

Jehovah is the only true God (undisputed).

Jesus is the creator (Gen 1:26-27, Is 44:24, John 1:3, Rom 11:36, John 1:10, Eph 3:9, Col 1:15-16 [cp. Ps 89:27, Gen 41:51-52, Jer 31:9], Heb 1:8, 10, 3:3-4) and sustainer (Col 1:17, Heb 1:3) of all things. He is the Savior (Is 43:11, Is 45:21, Hos 13:4, Titus 1:3, 4, 2:13, 3:4, Titus 3:6, 2 Pet 1:1). He gives things that only God can give (John 1:12-13, Rev 2:23). He is the judge of all (John 5:22, 23, 2 Cor 5:10) and has authority to forgive sins (Mark 2:5-7, 10, Luke 5:21, 5:24, 1 Cor 8:12, Eph 4:32). He is all-seeing (1 Ki 8:39, Rev 2:23), omniscient (1 Ki 8:39, Matt 9:4, 12:25, Mark 2:8, Luke 6:8, 9:47, John 11:1, Col 2:2-3, Rev 2:23 [cp. 1 Ki 8:39]), and omnipresent (Matt 18:20, 28:20). Jesus was eternally preexistent (Micah 5:2, John 1:1, Col 1:17, Heb 7:3) and He never changes (Heb 1:8, 10, 13:8). It is proper to serve Him (John 12:26, Rom 1:1, 1 Cor 4:1, 2 Cor 5:15, Gal 1:10, Phil 1:1, Col 3:24, 4:12, Jas 1:1, Jude 1), to pray to Him (John 14:14 [Kingdom Interlinear], Acts 7:59-60, 9:14, 9:20-21, 22:16, 22:17-19, Rom 10:9, 11-13, 1 Cor 1:2, 2 Cor 12:8-9, 1 Ti 1:12, Rev 22:20), to give Him glory (Is 42:8, 48:11, Dan 7:13-14, John 1:14, 5:22-23, 11:4, 13:31-32, 16:13-15, 17:5, Acts 3:13, Phil 2:9, Col 1:16, 2 Thess 1:12, 2 Pet 3:18, Rev 1:5-6, 5:11-14), and to worship Him (Matt 2:2, 8, 11, 4:10,

14:33, 28:9,16-17, John 9:38, Heb 1:6, Rev 5:8, 14:7 [cp. Acts 10:25, Rev 19:10, 22:8-9]). Jesus is Lord (Deut 10:17, Matt 12:8, John 20:27-28, Rom 10:9,11-13, Eph 4:4-5, James 2:1, Rev 17:14, 19:16) and is sovereign with His Father (Matt 25:31, 28:18, John 3:31,35, 13:3, 16:15, 17:10, Phil 2:9-11, Heb 1:2, 2:8, Rev 22:3). Being the Son of God (John 5:18, 10:28-33,36), He is also truly God (Deut 32:36,39, Is 9:6, 10:21, 43:10, 44:6 [cp. Is 48:12, Rev 1:17-18, 2:8, 21:6-7, 22:12-16,20], Matt 1:23, 13:41, John 1:1, 2:19,21 [cp. Acts 2:24], 5:18, 8:19,28,58-59 [cp. Ex 3:14; LXX], 10:28-33, 12:44, 13:19, 14:7-9, 15:13, 18:4-6, 20:28,29, Acts 20:28, Eph 3:19, Phil 2:6, Col 2:9, 1 Ti 3:15-16, Titus 2:13, Heb 1:3,4,8 [cp. Ps 45:6], 3:1-4, 2 Pet 1:1, 1 John 5:20, Rev 22:1-4) and Jehovah (Zech 2:8-11, 11:12-13 [cp. Matt 26:14-15], 12:1,10 [cp. Rev 1:7], 14:3-5 [cp. Matt 25:31, Acts 1:11-12], 14:5 [cp. 1 Thess 3:13], Matt 3:3, Mark 1:2-3, Luke 3:4, John 1:23, Luke 1:76 [cp. Is 40:3], Matt 21:15-16 [cp. Ps. 2:6], John 17:11,12, Rom 10:9,11-13 [cp. Joel 2:32], Phil 2:9, 1:4, 1:8,10 [cp. Ps 102:22-25]), together with His Father.

The Holy Spirit is a Person (Matt 3:16, 10:20, Mark 1:10, Luke 12:12, John 1:32, 14:16-17,26, 15:26, 16:7-8,13-15, Acts 1:16, 5:3,9, 10:19-20, 15:28, 20:23, Rom 8:16, 1 Cor 12:11, Eph 4:30, Heb 3:7, Heb 10:15, Rev 22:17), and is God (Gen 1:2 [cp. vs. 1], Matt 12:32, Luke 12:10, John 14:26, Acts 1:16 [cp. Heb 1:1], Acts 5:3-4, 28:25 [cp. Heb 1:1], 2 Cor 13:14, Heb 10:15-17) together with the Father and with the Son.

The Old Testament in several places indicates plurality in the Godhead (Gen 1:1,2,3, 1:26, 3:22, 11:7,9, Gen 18, 19:24, Ex 23:20-23 [cp. 1 Cor 10:4], Is 48:12,16, 63:7-14, Zech 2:8-11, 3:2]). As mentioned above, the Bible indicates both the deity of Christ and the personality and deity of the Holy Spirit.

These factors, together with the deity of the Father (undisputed), produce a description of the Godhead in trinity. Especially in the New Testament, these three Persons are repeatedly spoken of as cooperating collectively (Matt 3:16-17, Mark 1:9-11, Luke 3:21-22, Matt 28:19, Luke 1:35, John 3:34-35, John 14:26, 16:13-15, Acts 2:32-33, 38-39, Rom 15:16,30, 1 Cor 12:4-6, 2 Cor 3:4-6, 13:14 [cp. 1 John 1:3], Gal 4:4-6, Eph 4:4-6, Heb 10:12,15, 1 Pet 1:2).

Man

Man is composed of the spirit, the soul, and the body (1 Thess 5:23).

The term "sleep" is never applied to either the spirit or the soul in the Bible, but only to the body (Ps 146:3-4, Matt 9:24,

John 11:11, Acts 7:59-60, 13:36, 1 Thess 4:14).

The spirit of man is a distinct entity, and normally dwells in the body (Zech 12:1, Matt 26:41, Mark 2:8, 8:12, Luke 1:46-47, Rom 1:9, 8:16, 1 Cor 2:11, 5:5, 6:20, 14:2,14, 2 Cor 7:1, 2 Ti 4:22). At death the spirit departs from the body (Eccl 12:7, Is 26:19, Luke 8:52,55, 23:46, Acts 7:59-60, Heb 12:22-24). In this state the individual awaits resurrection of the body (Deut 18:10-11, 1 Sam 28:11-15, Eccl 12:7, Is 14:9-10, Matt 10:28, 17:3, Mark 9:4 [cp. Matt 17:9; "vision": Gr. orama—that which is seen; a spectacle—cp. Luke 24:23], Matt 27:49,50, Mark 15:36, Luke 12:5, 16:22,25,30, 23:43,46, John 2:19, 8:51, 11:25-26, 19:30, Acts 7:59, 20:10, Rom 8:38-39, 2 Cor 5:8, Phil 1:23-24, 2:10, 2 Ti 4:6, Heb 12:22-23, 2 Pet 1:13-15, Rev 6:9-11, 20:4; see also the verses cited below in reference to resurrection).

Although man in totality is often referred to in the Bible as a soul (e.g. Gen 2:7), many passages speak of the soul of man living on after the death of the body (Gen 35:18, 1 Ki 17:21-22, Matt 10:28, Acts 20:9-10, Rev 6:9-11, 20:4).

Jesus' body was resurrected (Matt 12:40, Mark 16:6, Luke 24:3,39, John 2:19,21, 20:27, Acts 2:27 [cp. Ps. 16:10], 13:34-37, Col 2:9, 1 Ti 2:5).

The bodies of Christians with the "heavenly hope" will be resurrected (Rom 8:11,23, Phil 3:20-21). Their bodies will be *changed* at their resurrection (John 20:26, 1 Cor 15:44,52-53).

At the resurrection, men will be judged by the deeds which they have performed in their bodies during their previous lives on earth; not by future deeds which they will perform during the millennium (Matt 16:27, Luke 11:31-32, John 5:28,29, Acts 17:31, 2 Cor 5:10, Heb 9:27, Rev 20:12-13).

The "second resurrection" occurs after the millennial reign of Christ has been completed (Rev 20:5 [cp. vs. 4]).

It is possible for one to experience torment in Hades (Luke 16:23-24).

Eternal, conscious torment is the eventuality of those who are cast into "gehenna," the lake of fire (Is 66:24, Dan 12:2, Matt 3:12, 8:11-12, 29, 13:42,49-50, 18:8, 22:13, 25:46, Mark 5:7, 9:43, Luke 3:17, 10:12, 12:5, Heb 10:27-29, Rev 14:9-11, 19:20, 20:10, 22:14-15).

God's People

Unfulfilled prophecy given to the nation Israel will have

fulfillment in the nation Israel (Gen 3:15 [cp. 37:9,10, Rev 12:1,5], 13:14-15, 17:7-8, 2 Sam 7:16, Ps 2:6, Is 2:1-4, 11:9,11-12 [cp. Matt 24:31, Rev 7:1-8], 25:6-10, 27:6, 33:20,24, 35:5-10, 45:17, 52:1, 65:17-21,24, 66:20,22, Jer 3:17,18, 23:3-8, 33:14-16, Ez 16:60, 21:25-27, 37:25, Hos 3:5, Joel 2:32, 3:20, Amos 9:14-15, Ob 15,17, Mic 4:1-4,7, Zeph 3:8,9,14-17, Hag 2:6-7,9, Zech 2:10-12, 8:20-23, 12:9-10, 14:3-4,16-17, 14:4 [cp. Acts 1:9,11-12], Matt 5:35, 10:23, 19:28, 23:37-39, Luke 1:32-33, 13:34-35, 21:24, Acts 1:6-7, 3:19-21, Rom 11:25-29, Rev 7:4, 12:1,5 [cp. Gen 37:9-10], Rev 14:1, 20:9 [cp. Is 52:1]). The restoration and blessing of Israel is a critical element in the outworking of Jehovah's kingdom program.

Jesus, when speaking to His disciples, referred to them as a "little flock," which they were at the time (Luke 12:32). There is no basis for equating the "little flock" of Luke 12:32 with the 144,000 of Revelation chapters 7 and 14.

The 144,000 are sealed from among the nation Israel (Rev 7:3,4,9, 14:1,6) to become "bondservants of our God," in contrast with Earth's millennial kings who are purchased from "every tribe and tongue and people and nation" (Rev 5:9-10). The 144,000 are sealed just prior to or during the Tribulation (Rev 7:1,3).

The Bible nowhere states that the 144,000 are sealed to be kings, priests, or the bride of Christ (Rev 7:3-8, 14:1-5).

In our day, as in the first century, God is dealing primarily with the church of Jesus Christ (Acts 20:28, 1 Cor 12:12, 2 Cor 11:2, Eph 2:21-22, 4:4, 5:29-32, 1 Ti 3:15, Heb 12:22-23).

There is no good reason for equating the "other sheep" of John 10:16 with the "great crowd" of Revelation 7:9. By all indications the "other sheep" of John 19:16 are gentile Christians (John 10:16, 11:51-52, Eph 2:13-14,16).

Members of the great crowd may or may not pass through the great tribulation and enter directly into everlasting life on earth. There are indications that they will spend some time in heaven (Rev 7:9,15,11, 14:1,3; 7:9,15, 3:12, 11:19, 15:5-6,8, 16:1, 11:1-2; 7:9,15, 13:6, 15:5-6, Heb 8:1-2, 9:11,24; Rev 7:9,14, 22:14 [cp. 21:2]).

The rapture is the only valid hope (other than dying in Christ and being resurrected) for all true Christians alive on earth today (see the verses cited below in reference to the rapture).

There is more than one faithful slave mentioned in Jesus' parables (Matt 25:20-23).

The "faithful and sensible slave" will be identified and rewarded when Christ returns (Matt 24:44-47). Christ has not yet returned (see the verses cited below in reference to the return of Christ).

The "faithful and discreet slave class" of Jehovah's Witnesses has proven to be neither faithful nor discreet in their interpretation of Bible prophecy (The following are some of the predictions made by the "faithful and discreet slave class" of Jehovah's Witnesses over the years: The year 1799 definitely marks the beginning of the time of the end [Creation, pp. 294,298], The 1000 years of Christ's reign began in 1873 [The Time is at Hand, foreword p. 2], The Scriptural proof is that the second presence of the Lord Jesus Christ began in 1874 A.D. [Prophecy, p. 65], The second coming of the Lord began in 1874 [Creation, pp. 289,298, Prophecy, p. 76], The beginning of the battle of the great day is dated from October 1874 [WT 1/15/1892, p. 1355], The Kingdom of God will begin its exercise of power in 1878 [The Time is at Hand p. 101], The formal inauguration of Christ's Kingly office dates from April 1878 [The Day of Vengeance, p. 621], Christ has been invisibly present since October 1884 [The Day of Vengeance, p. 621], The Battle of the Great Day of God the Almighty had begun by 1886 [WT 1/1886, vol. VII, pp. 816,817], The battle of the great day of God Almighty is already commenced [The Time is at Hand (1908), p. 101], The stress of the great time of trouble will be on us somewhere between 1910 and 1912 [The New Creation, p. 579], World War I is leading into the Battle of Armageddon [WT 4/1/15, p. 102], By the end of 1914 the blindness of natural Israel will begin to be turned away [The Time is at Hand, p. 77], The last member of the church will be glorified sometime before the end of 1914 [The Time is at Hand, p. 77], Christendom will be completely destroyed by October 1914 [WT 1/15/1892, p. 1355], The year 1914 will be the farthest limit of the rule of imperfect men [The Time is at Hand, pp. 76,77], The date for the close of the battle of the great day is definitely marked in Scripture as October 1914 [WT 1/15/1892, p. 1355], Armageddon is likely to begin in the spring of 1915 [WT 9/1/14], The Battle of the Great Day of God Almighty had begun by 1916 [WT 9/1/16, pp. 265,266], In the year 1918 God will destroy the churches wholesale and the church members by the millions. Any that escape shall come to the works of Pastor Russell to learn the meaning of the downfall of "Christianity" [The Finished Mystery, p. 485], The date 1925 is even more distinctly indicated by the scriptures than is 1914, and before 1925 the great crisis will be reached and probably passed [WT 9/1/22], In 1925 the earthly phase of the Kingdom will be recognized [Millions Now Living will Never Die, p. 89], Abraham, Isaac,

Jacob and the faithful prophets of old will be resurrected and fully restored to perfect humanity in the fall of 1925 [Millions Now Living will Never Die, pp. 88-90], We should, therefore, expect shortly after 1925 to see the awakening of Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Melchisedec, Job, Moses, Samuel, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, John the Baptist, and others mentioned in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews [The Way to Paradise, p. 224], ...the remaining months before Armageddon [WT 9/15/41, p. 288], Those faithful men of old may be expected back from the dead any day now [The New World (1942), p. 104, Six thousand years from man's creation will end in 1975. It may be the purpose of God for Christ's reign to run parallel with the 7th millennium of man's existence [Life Everlasting in the Freedom of the Sons of God, pp. 29,30, WT 8/15/68, pp. 497-501]].

Christians are taught primarily by God's Word, the Bible, and by the Holy Spirit (Matt 16:16-17, Matt 18:20, John 14:26, John 15:26, John 16:13, Gal 1:15-18, 1 John 2:26-27, 1 John 5:20). Human agencies may also be employed (Acts 8:30-31).

Christians are persecuted for bearing the name of Jesus Christ (Matt 5:11, 10:22, 24:9, Mark 13:13, Luke 21:12,17, John 15:21, Acts 9:16, Gal 6:12, Phil 1:29, 2 Ti 3:12, 1 Pet 4:14,16, Rev 2:3, 16:6, 20:4).

Salvation

The true gospel is primarily the good news of our redemption by the blood of Jesus Christ, which redemption is to be appropriated by faith (1 Cor 1:17-18,23-24, 15:1-4, Col 1:19-23). The gospel preached by the apostle Paul was primarily "Christ crucified" (1 Cor 1:22-24).

The "gospel" preached by Jehovah's Witnesses is very different from that which was preached by the apostle Paul and by Christians throughout the centuries ("Let the honest-hearted person compare the kind of preaching of the gospel done by the religious systems of Christendom during all the centuries with that done by Jehovah's Witnesses since the end of World War I in 1918. They are not one and the same kind. That of Jehovah's Witnesses is really "gospel" or "good news," as of God's heavenly kingdom that was established by the enthronement of his Son Jesus Christ at the end of the Gentile Times in 1914." [Watchtower, May 1, 1981, p. 17]).

According to the Scriptures, the messengers of the gospel preached by Jehovah's Witnesses are to be accursed (Gal 1:8-9).

To be born again means to be born spiritually by a supernatural act of God (Jer 31:33-34, Ez. 36:25-27, Tit 3:5, 1 Pet 1:23). One must be born again to be saved (John 1:12-13, Acts 2:38-39, Rom 8:8,9 [cp. vs. 15], 1 John 5,12).

One cannot see God's kingdom nor enter into it without having been born again (John 3:3,5,7).

The "new man" is created in a Christian when he is born again (2 Cor 5:17, Eph 4:24-25, Col 3:9-11).

To be saved one must believe on the Lord Jesus Christ (John 3:14-16,36, 6:47, Acts 13:38-39,48, 16:29-31, Rom 10:9-10,13, Rev 3:20).

One can test himself to see whether or not he is "in the faith" (2 Cor 13:5). The indwelling Holy Spirit bears witness to a Christian that he has been saved (Rom 8:16, Eph 1:13-14). The Christian has assurance of salvation (John 5:24, 10:28, Rom 8:1-2,11, Eph 1:13-14, 4:30, Phil 4:3, Col 3:3-4, Heb 10:35, 1 John 5:13). It is proper for a Christian to say that he has been saved (John 3:36, 5:24, 6:47, Rom 5:11, 8:1-2, Eph 2:5, 4:32, Phil 4:3, 2 Ti 1:8-9, Heb 10:19, 1 Pet 1:23, 1 John 3:14, 5:11,13).

The Christian's *bodily* salvation is yet future (Rom 5:9-10, 8:11, Eph 4:30, 1 Pet 1:4-5).

The finished redemptive work of Christ is fully sufficient for the justification of a believer (Acts 13:39, Rom 8:1-2, Col 1:21-22, 2:13-14,20-23, Heb 9:12, 10:10, 1 Pet 2:24). A Christian is justified by faith in Christ alone (John 3:16-18,36, 5:24, 6:28-29,40,47, 20:31, Acts 10:43, 13:39, 26:15,18, Rom 3:21-28, 5:1, 6:23, 7:6, 8:1-2, Gal 2:16, 5:1, Eph 2:8-9, Phil 3:9, Col 2:13-14,20-23, Titus 3:5-7, Heb 4:10, 1 John 1:7, 3:22-23, Rev 5:9, 7:14). Good works, however, naturally follow true faith (Matt 7:21-23, Eph 2:8-9, Phil 2:12-13, Titus 3:5-8, Jas 2:17,20,24,26).

One must come to Jesus for salvation (Matt 11:28-30, John 5:39-40, 6:35,37,44,45, 7:37-38, 12:32, 14:6, Heb 13:13, 1 Pet 2:25).

One can know Jesus personally (John 14:21, 17:3, Phil 3:10). One who has no relationship with Christ has no relationship with God (Gal 3:26, 1 John 5:12).

A Christian has an intimate personal relationship with Jesus (John 14:23, 15:4-5, 17:23, Rom 13:14, 1 Cor 1:9, 6:16,17, 2 Cor 12:9, 13:5, Gal 2:20, 3:27, 4:6,19, Eph 3:16-17, 4:15, Phil 4:7, Col 2:6,10, 3:11, 1 Pet 3:15, 1 John 1:3, Rev 3:20).

A Christian should love Jesus more than he loves his own life (Matt 16:25, 20:37, Eph 6:24, Phil 1:21, 3:8).

All true Christians alive today have been born again, are under the new covenant by virtue of Christ's blood, and rightly partake of the emblematic bread and wine (John 6:33,51,53, Rev 7:9,14).

Christian life, empowered by the Holy Spirit, is fundamentally free and simple (Matt 11:28-30, Acts 13:39, Rom 7:6, 14:14,17, 1 Cor 2:2, 10:23, 2 Cor 11:3, Gal 3:2-3, Heb 4:10, Titus 1:15, 1 Pet 2:16, 1 John 5:3-5). A Christian is not subject to the bondage of men who would enslave him (1 Cor 7:23, Gal 2:4-5, 5:1,13).

Although Christians are encouraged to witness to their fellow men (Matt 28:19-20, Acts 5:42, 1 Cor 9:16, 11:1, Eph 6:15, Phil 1:14, Rev 22:17), house-to-house preaching is not a prerequisite for salvation.

Christians have differing roles in the ministry; not all Christians are preachers (1 Cor 12:28-29, Eph 4:11).

The message to be preached by Christians today is "Christ crucified" (Luke 24:46-47, 1 Cor 1:23).

The Last Days

The invisible return of Christ in the year 1914 is a foundational doctrine of Watchtower theology (cp. the Watchtower's interpretations of Matt 24:45-47, 25:31-32, etc.).

The return of Christ did not occur invisibly in the fall of 1914 C.E (Matt 24:42,44, Acts 1:6-7). This visible event is still future (Matt 24:26-27,30, Mark 13:26, Luke 17:24, 21:27, Acts 1:9,11-12 [cp. Zech 14:4], 3:21, Phil 3:20, 1 Thess 4:16, 2 Thess 1:7, 1 Ti 6:14, 2 Ti 4:8, Titus 2:13, Heb 9:28, 1 John 2:28, 3:2, Rev 1:7 [cp. Zech 12:10]).

The duration of the "times of the gentiles" cannot be ascertained by a study of Daniel chapter 4 (this prophecy was fulfilled by Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 4:24-37).

The kingdom is restored to the nation Israel at the end of the "times of the gentiles" (see the verses cited above in reference to the future restoration of the nation Israel).

The signs of Christ's return are to occur before His return and are to give evidence that He is shortly to appear (Matt

24:7-8,33, Mark 13:29, 13:8).

We should expect to find persons in these last days prematurely announcing Christ's return (Luke 21:8-9).

The rapture has not yet occurred. At the rapture, Christians will be taken up bodily to meet the Lord (John 14:3,18, Phil 3:20-21, 1 Thess 1:10, 4:15-18, 1 John 3:2, Rev 3:10).

Expectation of the rapture has a purifying affect on those who have this hope (Phil 1:6,10, 1 John 2:28, 3:2-3).

Christ will be physically present on earth during the millennium (see the verses cited above in reference to the return of Christ and the future restoration of the nation Israel). The bride of Christ will rule with Him then.

There will be those who will live through the great tribulation and enter directly into the cleansed earth (see Israel, above). Humans will inhabit the earth during the millennium. However, the rapture is the only Biblical hope for Christians alive now.

The present heaven and the present earth will be destroyed by fire at the end of the 1000-year reign of Christ (Ps 102:25-26, Is 51:6, Matt 5:18, 24:35, Mark 13:31, Luke 21:33, Heb 1:10-12, 2 Pet 3:7,10-12, Rev 20:11). A new heaven and a new earth will be created (Is 65:17, 2 Pet 3:13, Rev 21:1).

Summary

To sum up the findings of my study, historic evangelical Christianity, not Jehovah's Witnesses, is indeed the one "true religion." The Watchtower Society is, far from being "God's clean organization," one of the "false prophets" that Jesus warned us of in Matthew chapter 24. Jehovah's Witness are, far from being the "only true Christians," yet another entry in the age-long list of man-made rebellions against the true church of God, the "pillar and support of the truth (1 Ti 3:15)."

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